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OPEN LETTER TO JOE

Dear Joe:

Everybody is writing you letters. Don't let this annoy you, for with us Americans writing letters to editors, congressmen and other celebrities is only a national habit. It's in line with what we call democracy -- if you will pardon the expression.

Let me assure you that my presumption in addressing you stems from a sincere concern for the success of your program. I am not one of those who are bent on reforming you. Far from it. You are The Perfect State; to even suggest improvement is superarrogation. I suspect that the criticism hurled at you, particularly from our own neophytes in the business of Statism, springs from envy and is in fact only left-handed admiration. You are the Ideal of every Statist in the world, including the pip-squeak professors who try to show with calculus how you can be bettered, as well as the "democratic" boy scouts in Washington who hurl epithets at you. Don't let these amateurs bother you. You are tops!

Your mission is world conquest. Good! That has always been the goal of The Perfect State. Other fellows in the past have failed in the attempt, but that is no reason why you should fail. You have more than an even chance of making it. The only hurdle in your path is the Bungling State at Washington, and I want to tell you just how you can remove it. That's why I am writing you.

II

It seems to me your present course is hurting your chances. You are building up your opposition. By supplying the Bunglers with a scarecrow you are making it possible for them to build up a State here that would give you a run for your money. Chief Bungler Harry is not strong on knowledge and probably never heard of the Marxist maxim that the way to destroy private property (and thus establish a top-drawer State) is to tax it out of existence. Despite his lack of book learning, he is learning fast, principally because he has seen how you do it.

Harry's difficulty is the American tradition of private property, to which we still give lip service, and Harry can't break through this tradition without a permanent "dire emergency". You know how important it is for the State to work on the herd instinct and how necessary for that purpose is a first class bogeyman. Everything you have been doing

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these past five years has helped to build you up as the bogeyman supreme, and unless you change your tactics Harry will make use of you to confiscate every bit of property in the country, and then you will have a real State to contend with.

I have no illusions about your predatory ambitions. You've got to have a war to stay in business and a successful war with this country would suit you fine. Your native slaves are undoubtedly kicking up a fuss over their rations; a diversionary war might be comme il faut in the circumstances. And you are undoubtedly thinking about the confusion and the ineffectiveness of our defense measures, and how much easier it would be for you to attack now and not wait until some sound program, like that proposed by Herbert Hoover, is put into effect; the aimless plans of Mr. Truman and Gen. Eisenhower might be more propitious for you.

However, the question is, is this the proper time to get going on your war? I don't think so. I believe I can show you that if you put off your war for a couple of years, despite internal difficulties, your prospects for success would be improved. If you will correct your timing, Joe, you should be able to achieve the first World State in history. You will achieve what a lot of fellows, from Ghengis Khan down to FDR, only dreamed about. Listen to my argument.

III

For some time now our economy has been geared to war. More and more we have been producing for waste, not consumption. Every machine in the country is turning out something that, directly or indirectly, contributes to the stockpile of destruction, and every worker is engaged in providing fodder for the management of that stockpile. We still talk of "business" as if it were the process of the production of goods and services, of things people want, but the fact of the matter is that for several generations more than a third of all our production has been going down the rat hole. (Look at the tax figures.) At this writing, due to the scare resulting from your poor timing, the proportion is increasing; within a year, the way things are going, at least half of our time will be put into feeding the State.

To drive home the point, our armed forces and our bureaucrats now total approximately six million non-producing consumers, and that comes to about ten per cent of our employable population. The other ninety per cent are thus "fully employed". I needn't tell you, an expert in these things, that besides being busy we are quite rich, thanks to the printing presses.

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You know all this, but what you are apparently losing sight of is that all this "prosperity" rests on you. Without you as Bogeyman Number One all this busyness would be impossible. Our economy is so constructed that without an "enemy" it would collapse. Of course, the economics professors could undoubtedly frame another reason for continuing along these lines, but that would take some time. Right now the structure of American "business" is supported by none other than Joe Stalin, and his removal from the scene would be a calamity.

You should see what I am driving at. Some of your economists have been predicting the smashup of what remains of our capitalistic system these past five years, and have been advising you to wait for it before making your war-move. Report has it that because the smashup has not come you have put these boys in the doghouse. You must not be so hard on them. They simply did not take into consideration the support you yourself have given our economy; it even escaped your omniscience. Maybe if you had not supplied our neophyte Statists with plausibilities for spending ourselves into prosperity, things would be with us as your oracles predicted. You put off our bust.

IV

Suppose you should pull the rug from under the boys who are managing our economy. You would leave them flat on their collective buttocks, and before they could pick themselves up -- well, the thing you have been hoping for would happen. Without you to blame everything on, there would be no immediate excuse for spending billions on armaments, both for ourselves and our weak sisters in Europe.

What then? Our factories would shut down, millions would be out of work. There would be moaning and groaning all over the land. The proletariat would be joined by the capitalists in one general "relief" concert. Our "prosperity" would indeed be punctured.

So, the thing for you to do -- and that is the purpose of this letter -- is to remove yourself as the indispensable bogeyman. Pull a real peace offensive -- right now. I don't mean one of those fake things you have been staging; these have obviously boomeranged in your face. I mean something that cannot be mistaken, say like marching your armies straight East out of Germany, and doing it without previous parliamentary palaver, without notice. You ought to be able to figure out some world-startling stunt that would leave our inept planners gasping for breath. The sudden realization that you cannot be counted on to support our economy would be most demoralizing.

What I am suggesting, if you think of it, is in line with what your immortal Lenin advised as sound Communistic strategy: one step backward

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and two steps forward. After you have upset our economic apple cart by the move suggested, and confusion is all over the country, you can then go ahead with your main purpose.

For, as you know, chaos always brings on a demand for a messiah. Some one will surely pop up. Whoever he is, he will be ideologically beholden to you, for there would be no better one to turn to. In fact, the logical candidate for the job would be one of the fellows you have planted in our bureaucracy, or in our unions, somebody who has been worshipping you all these years.

Permit me to nominate for the job somebody with a good old Anglo-Saxon name, maybe sporting a Phi Beta Kappa key. Or, you couldn't do better than to pick one of the ubiquitous Roosevelt clan.

There it is, Joe. Don't you realize now that an honest-to-goodness peace move right now is just what you need to get yourself a satellite across the Atlantic? Now, go to it.

Yours for the State Supreme,

FRANK CHODOROV

P.S. This advice is given gratuitously. If, however, you should think it of any value, and wish to recompense me, just put me wise about a week before you make your big move -- but don't tell anybody else. I will notify my broker to place some "short selling" orders and, believe me, I will make plenty. And, about the time your armies start moving out of Germany I will take a walk down to the corner of Wall and Broad Streets to see what happens. I believe I will have to duck the bodies of the deflated millionaires as they drop from the tall buildings.

P.P.S. The newspapers are giving front-page space to the proposed Four Power Conference. It is reported that you had something to do with instigating this thing. In that case, it may be that you anticipated my advice. Good! However, let me warn you to watch our Washington boys. They talk a lot about peace, but I suspect they would like to keep the war-pot boiling. They don't want war, of course, but they certainly don't want peace — real peace — either. In order to keep in the saddle and to carry out their economic phantasmagoria they must have a permanent delenda est Carthago; in which capacity you have served well. So, be careful they do not maneuver you out of a real peace move at Paris.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VIII, No. 9

MAR '51

By Frank C. Hanighen February 28, 1951

REVOLT IN THE HOUSE: Topic No. 1 in the cloakrooms continues to be the amazing fact that a big majority of GOP House members have gone on record for the Hoover foreign policy views -- and, at that, against the will of the GOP leadership in the lower chamber. When Lawrence Smith (Wis.), aided by Congresswoman St. George (N.Y.), offered on February 14 a "Hoover policy" round-robin for signatures, they scarcely expected to get 100. The first return brought 108, and by now the total has reached 124 (out of the Republican membership of 199 in the House).

It would be well for the GOP House leadership (as well as the Administration too) to realize that the 124 members make up no narrow, middle-western clique. A geographical analysis shows the considerable pull exerted by the round-robin on areas far removed from the corn belt. Thus, from California there were 8 out of a total GOP House delegation of 13; from Oregon, 2 out of 4; from Washington, 3 out of 4; from Maine, 2 out of 3; from Massachusetts, 2 out of 8; from Connecticut, 2 out of 4; from Pennsylvania, 10 out of 20, from New Jersey, 3 out of 9; and from New York -- whose Republican Governor Dewey strongly opposes the Hoover-Taft concepts -- there were 11 out of 22. In short, this movement in the GOP is nationwide.

The phenomenon indicates that, despite the Eisenhower sales campaign and the deafening chorus of the eastern press, the popular demand for not only "reconsideration", but also "reconstruction" of foreign policy is very strong. (Mr. Hoover's performance yesterday on the Hill will scarcely diminish this.) Thus, the current fight of Taft and Wherry in the Senate enjoys a solid popular base, and the inclination of the majority leadership to compromise reveals that the Administration is aware of it. Finally, the Lawrence Smith "Declaration of Policy" movement discloses the emergence of a powerful opposition, reinvigorated by the recent elections and possessed of a high sense of legislative duty.

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VICTORY FOR THE UNION LEADERS: The tight wage "freeze" formula initially imposed by Defense Mobilizer Wilson and Economic Stabilizer Johnston over the grim opposition of the big union leaders has been "softened up" at the direction of Mr. Truman by insertions of exceptions which go very far in giving the unionists the most substantial victory they have had at the hands of the Truman administration. This time Mr. Truman applied the pressure to Wilson and Johnston, and new holes in the wage ceiling were immediately evident. Instead of a tight 10 per cent ceiling on wage increases, the fringe benefits in excess of this percentage which have been agreed to, or may be agreed to, by employer and employee groups, will have the stamp of approval under the wage "freeze".

Union leaders had an ace in the hole, which they made evident to Mr. Truman. More than a dozen serious controversies over wages exist in outstanding industries, among them General Electric with which Wilson was formerly connected, and Mr. Truman was made aware that these situations could quickly change into an epidemic of strikes. He was told the new formula would aggravate the strained relations in already existing controversies. The capitulation was complete. Whatever the unionists say in public, they know it was a "concession" in their favor indicating they are still in the top bracket of political contact with the President.

Wilson and Johnston struggled to keep the wage ceiling intact, but they could not cope with the flank movement of the union leaders. Each of them learned that

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however firm may be his stand, disgruntled individuals can go over his head to the President, get a hearing and a decision that carries a modification for him.

Wilson is not being pushed out as Defense Mobilizer, but many wonder how long he will want to retain the job.

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FARM FIGHT: There is a legal battle looming that may soon pit against each other the two great farm organizations, the National Farm Bureau Federation and the National Farmers Union -- in a knock-down and drag-out struggle. What lends even greater emphasis to the prospect is that the clash comes over the issue of "Communists in Agriculture" (a topic which this column was the first to raise last spring). And the struggle is all the more significant because, although there has never been any love lost between the two -- the Right-wing Farm Bureau and the Left-wing Farmers Union -- they have never really taken the gloves off in public.

But now an impending hearing in a Utah court will tell whether the whole question of Communists in Agriculture will receive a thorough airing by legal process. Here's how it started. During the last election campaign, copies of the famous speech by Senator Styles Bridges in the Senate (September 7, 1950), described at the time in this column, were broadcast widely through farm areas and became an issue in various contests, particularly in Utah. In that speech, Bridges offered evidence of infiltration of Communists in the National Farmers Union. The Union claims that the Bureau repeated some of these charges during the election campaign, and is suing the Farm Bureau Federation of Utah for libel. The suit is up soon for the first hearing before the courts. When the Utah Farm Bureau decided to fight the suit, observers of the farm field felt sure that the National Farm Bureau Federation under President Allan Kline must have assured its Utah brethren of full support.

The matter has big implications. For, the famous Bridges speech, while primarily aimed at the Farmers Union, struck also at the close ties between the Farmers Union and the Department of Agriculture, with Secretary Brannan at its head. The great issue of government control over agriculture, with alleged Red shaping of the Department's policy on such control, could prove to have explosive effects.

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TWENTY-SECOND AMENDMENT: The victory for the new constitutional amendment inspired Congressman Noah Mason to say that, if the amendment had been put in force 20 years ago, the sick FDR would not have gone to Yalta and we would not be in Korea today. Others said that the readiness of the state legislatures to give it approval in the past year indicates popular disillusionment with the Roosevelt myth, as well as a hint to Truman that he should not (although he legally can) run again. To others, the final achievement of a majority won for the amendment appears as a guarantee against repetition of the Roosevelt four-term experience.

We are less sanguine, more elegiac. We cannot find too much comfort for the future. The new amendment could prevent a life-term for a dictator. But it would not block an indefinite stay in power by an oligarchy. Such oligarchies or party dictatorships have existed for years in Latin-American countries; the presidency is simply passed in turn from one faction to another of a ruling party which remains in power for decades without any real opposition. Indeed, we find in the whole matter a rather ominous parallel with what has long marked many so-called republics south of the border.

Many years ago, while travelling in the hot lands, we noticed agitation over the issue of "re-eleccion" and passage of laws preventing a third, or even a second term for a President. Rather patronizingly then, we smiled at the Latin-American efforts to block the authoritarianism which from the beginning characterized their attempts to enjoy real republican, constitutional, representative government. Those

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were the days when the United States del Norte required no 22nd Amendment and a fine republican tradition was all that was needed to prevent a third term. Perhaps some future Spengler will describe how we have moved into the Latin-American pattern.

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RFC: The uproar over the RFC is mainly -- uproar. Sen. Fullbright and colleagues no doubt perform a service in dredging up dank, smelly undergrowth. Perhaps they will accomplish some reformation by placing the agency under one responsible official. Whether they or the President won on points in the various moves and countermoves remains a matter of dispute; and a lot of newsies can dispute a great deal over this, in the present rather dull situation on Capitol Hill. What is noticeable, unfortunately, is that almost no one under the Capitol dome felt moved to draw the obvious moral: that the RFC should be abolished anyway.

One would have thought that some legislators at least would have polished off the matter with the argument that no such institution should continue to exist, since private banking can provide any money needed for legitimate projects. It is true that Senator Tobey of New Hampshire did say that the RFC should be abolished. But the Senator from New Hampshire placed the issue almost on an evangelical, religious basis: that the agency had become a sort of Sodom and Gomorrah, breeding sin and corruption; therefore it should be cast into outer darkness. But, even on that basis, Tobey's words found few echoes. The truth of the matter is that many members find the RFC a sort of useful pork-barrel agency from time to time and would be loath to see it go. All in all, the RFC episode shows neither legislature nor executive in any attractive light.

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OPS: There is one commodity, the price of which the OPS has not yet sought to control. That is brainwork. For instance, there is no record that they have sought a rollback on that painful but sacrosanct institution, the lawyer's fee. It may be well objected that, since many of the OPS staff are lawyers (who possibly expect to practice again, and more lucratively after precious "Washington experience"), a sort of freemasonry among barristers would keep untouched "advice of counsel". But, how about artistic productions -- poetry, paintings, sculpture or music? One cannot escape the conclusion that the fining of say Jo Davidson or Archibald MacLeish for exacting "exorbitant" fees would be nothing short of revolutionary.

Now, all the foregoing is not mere mischievous speculation at all. We have not yet reached this "control of brain work", simply because our socialistic government has not matured and spread its branches far enough -- as yet. But it is a fact that these very problems are agitating subjects of another socialist state, Norway.

The Oslo Farmand reported recently that the Price Control and City Court in the Norwegian Capital fined a lawyer for charging "100 per cent too much". The fine came to about the equivalent of $75. Farmand comments: "This raises an interesting question. Some paintings by Edward Munch are sold today for 50,000 kronen. This is a far higher price than Munch got when he had to sell a picture for a beefsteak, but do the Price Control and the City Court call 50,000 kronen an exorbitant price? If they do, what fine would have been imposed on the painter if he had lived now and sold his paintings at a price that many are willing to pay for his pictures?

"During a certain period of the war, the porters at the Oslo City Hospital received the same remuneration as the assistant doctors. The first job required two fairly strong arms; the other, certain other qualifications plus six to eight years' training. If the expense of their studies is taken as the basis, it may safely be said that the assistant doctors hardly got exorbitant payment! If they did not do so, the porters, presumptively, did. We wonder if this thought ever occurred to the Price Directorate."

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Book Events

Design For War: A Study of Secret Power Politics 1937 - 1941 by Frederick R. Sanborn. New York: The Devin Adair Company. $5.00. Reviewed by Walter Trohan.

Let it be understood at the outset that there is not one new fact in the 547 pages of this study, nor does it blaze a new trail in historical thought. Yet this is a work no one who pretends to understand contemporary history can neglect. It details step by step how America was maneuvered into World War II by Franklin D. Roosevelt and convincingly lays at rest the ghost that U.S. entrance was inevitable.

Mr. Sanborn is a distinguished lawyer and scholar holding degrees in international law and diplomacy. He spent three years at Oxford working under the great legal historian, the late Sir Edward Holdsworth. He has brought this training to bear in an objective study of pre-war secret power politics. Mr. Sanborn cites almost no anti-Roosevelt sources, preferring the memoirs of hero-worshippers and sources which pretend to impartiality. He does not apologize; he does not pass moral judgments, and he does not intrude personal dicta.

He tells day by day what Mr. Roosevelt did and said publicly and what he whispered and contrived in private. The picture is not a pretty one, as many have come to realize. But it is not without a moral that is particularly apt at this moment. Sanborn insists that the American people should be advised of all diplomatic moves so that they may check the course toward war, if they are alarmed; or so that they will support the Government, if that policy is deemed sound.

Mr. Sanborn does assume the role of devil's advocate in the best sense of the word. He bolsters the stand of those individuals who contend that FDR deliberately maneuvered this nation into war with Japan; and that the President did so in order to get into the conflict on the side of Britain and Holland, with whom he had concluded secret defensive alliances.

While he was promising "again and again and again" that American boys would not be sent into foreign wars, FDR secretly adopted a progressively more unneutral course, which began with gifts of arms, continued with the relief of British garrisons by American troops, and the patrolling of the Atlantic in a non-declared war with Germany and Italy, and finally involved open shooting of Axis craft. When all this failed to arouse popular support for war, FDR turned to the Pacific and carried out a policy which he had described confidentially to Admiral Richardson, before the latter quit as Commander of the Fleet in protest against White House naval policy. This policy was that the Japanese "could not always avoid making mistakes, and that as the war continued and the area of operations expanded, sooner or later they would make a mistake and we would enter the war".

This is the story of how they were "encouraged", if not actually driven to make the mistake. It is also the story of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the fervid isolationist and his transformation into an equally fervid interventionist. Few will remember FDR as the author of such phrases as: "We are not isolationists except insofar as we seek to isolate ourselves completely from war." "I have made it clear that the United States cannot take part in political arrangements in Europe." "As a nation we have been fortunate in a geographic isolation which in itself has partially protected our boundless resources." Nor will many recall that FDR was concerned only in the most casual way with foreign affairs until his New Deal ran into serious trouble in the 1937 depression and at which point he turned to war as a way out.

In Mr. Sanborn's view, the American people were told by Roosevelt that what was in fact a secret war policy was really a peace policy or defense policy. The author argues that in the future the people should determine whether war is useful or necessary and in order to judge wisely should be fully informed and not kept in ignorance or misinformed. To all of which we can echo a hearty Amen.

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